

NSC BRIEFING

27 May 1957

THE HAITIAN SITUATION

I. Pro-Communist, anti-United States Daniel Fignole "proclaimed" provisional president 26 May following a day of bloody fighting in Port-au-Prince.

A. The military government of army chief of staff Brig. General Leon Cantave, who seized control from the executive council on 21 May, was threatened on 25 May by a coup engineered with the support of the deposed council. The coup failed after Fignole switched from the council to Cantave. Cantave subsequently switched from himself to Fignole.

B. Executive Council supporters may attempt a counter-revolt.

1. Recurrent crisis and political opportunism have unleashed bitter racial and sectional passions which will probably delay return to constitutional gov't.

2. Army split wide open.

3. Nation's economy at rock bottom.

C. Political situation chaotic at best.

II. Fignole was leader of Communist-affiliated Workers and Peasants Movement, dissolved by gov't in 1950.

A. However, has reportedly sold out to highest bidder.

B. Controls Port-au-Prince slums, can turn out street mobs.

III. Still no official communications--only press.

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HAITI: GOVERNMENTAL SUCCESSION 12 DECEMBER 56 to 26 MAY 57

Dictator President Paul E. Magloire ousted on 12 December 56 after attempting to extend his term unconstitutionally.

Succeeded by Joseph Nemours Pierre-Louis, president of the Supreme Court.

Pierre-Louis ousted on 3 February for failure to take direct action against Magloire assets and to set an election date.

Franck Sylvain elected provisional president by the National Assembly on 7 February. This deactivated the constitutional provisions for presidential succession.

Sylvain ousted on 2 April for attempting to prejudice the election, then scheduled for 28 April, in favor of Francois Duvalier.

Army maintained interim government until 6 April, when an executive council of government was determined by a caucus of the leading presidential candidates.

Executive council ousted 21 May charged with rigging elections, then scheduled for 16 June, in favor of Louis Dejoie and /or Daniel Fignole, who controlled the council.

Army chief of staff Leon Cantave in control of government 21 through 25 May.

Daniel Fignole proclaimed himself provisional president with support of Cantave 26 May.